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25X1

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No. 0112/71
11 May 1971

Central Intelligence Bulletin

CONTENTS

LAOS: Communist military activity is on the increase.
(Page 1)

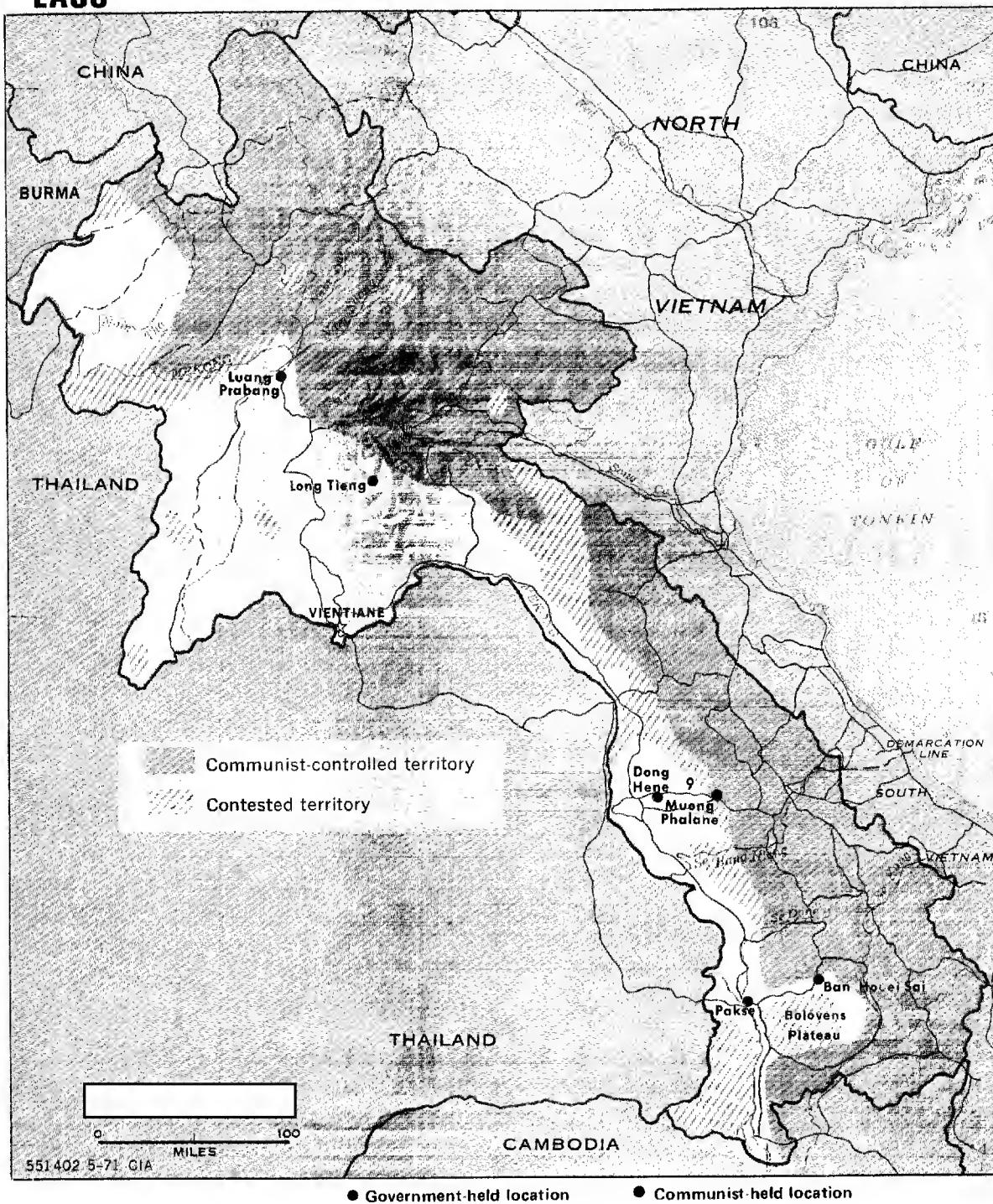
USSR: The Soviets will display the TU-144 and the
MI-12 helicopter at the Paris air show. (Page 5)

GREECE: Athens continues to improve relations with
its Balkan neighbors. (Page 6)

OKINAWA: Reversion politics (Page 7)

TURKEY: Improved security situation (Page 7)

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LAOS: Communist military activity is on the increase in southern Laos.

The Communists have continued to move westward on Route 9 after capturing Muong Phalane early this month. Government units in the Dong Hene area--one battalion of irregular troops and three regular army battalions--probably are not strong enough to stem a major enemy attack.

Government strength in this region has been reduced somewhat by the temporary assignment of units to northern Laos. The Communists may be trying to take advantage of this to extend their control along Route 9 or they may hope to force the government to return the southern-based units that have been active in the Luang Prabang and Long Tieng areas. An offensive along Route 9 presumably would also be designed to keep government forces off balance and to preclude government harassment against the western portions of the Communist infiltration corridor.

The Communists also seem to be planning new attacks further south on the Bolovens Plateau. [redacted]

25X1

[redacted] Ban Houei Sai, the principal government base on the northern approaches to the plateau, may be the Communists' first objective. In past years, the Communists have managed to maintain military pressure near the Bolovens well into the rainy season in contrast to north Laos, where longer lines of communication and more difficult terrain have slowed down the tempo of the war during the monsoons.

The North Vietnamese are running into some new problems in the south this year. In the past two months over 200 Pathet Lao (PL) troops have rallied to the government at Pakse. The latest group of 55, which rallied on 10 May, included field-grade officers and political cadre. The ralliers have helped

25X1
11 May 71

Central Intelligence Bulletin

1

~~SECRET~~

25X1

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Approved For Release 2003/05/19 : CIA-RDP79T00975A019000040001-6

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to locate North Vietnamese troop and supply concentrations for air strikes and have provided useful information on the strength and composition of NVA units in the area.

The decision of the ralliers to switch sides apparently stems from what they view as North Vietnamese mistreatment and increased levies on Lao villagers as well as their belief that the North Vietnamese were responsible for the death of a widely respected Pathet Lao general. The latter story was trumped up by the government.

There have been relatively few defections among Laotian Communists during the course of the war, and these are the first instances of unit-size defections. It is too early to tell whether this is an isolated problem or is a sign of widespread disaffection in Communist ranks. Communist propaganda reflects North Vietnamese sensitivity to the problem, and because the North Vietnamese depend on the PL for logistic and rear security support, they will probably redouble their efforts to keep their restive allies in line.

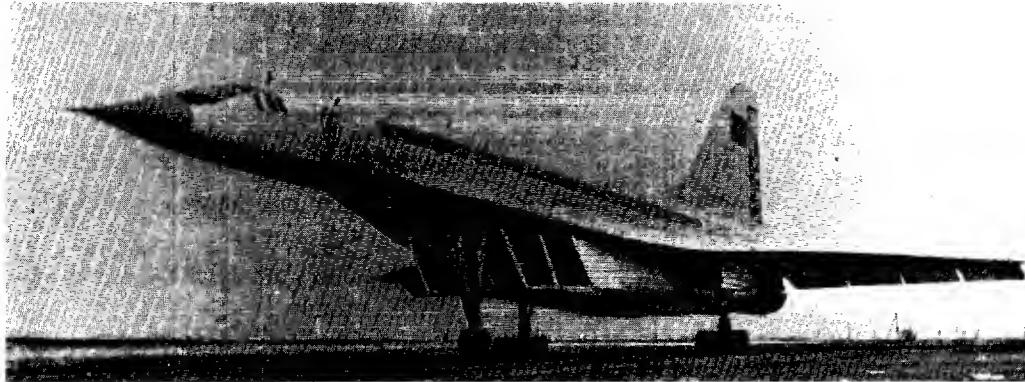
25X1

11 May 71

Central Intelligence Bulletin

3

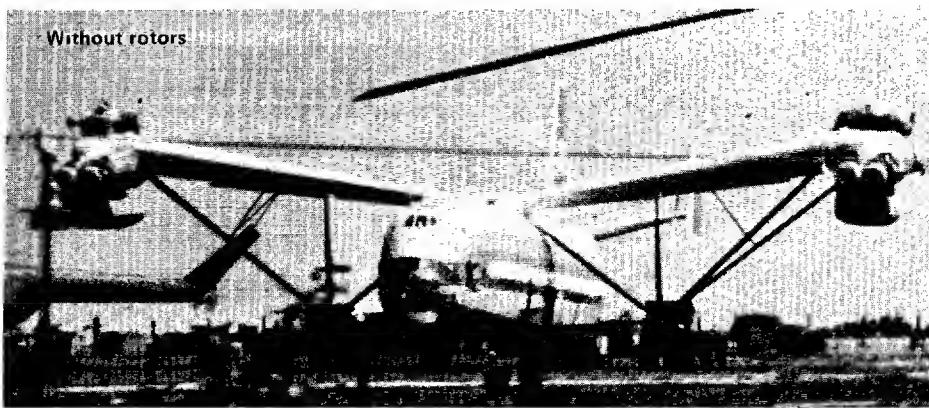
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TU-144 Supersonic Transport

Length 190 feet
Wing span 92 feet
Cruising speed 1,260 knots
Maximum payload 20,000 pounds
Range (with 20,000 lb. load) approx. 2,000 NM

MI-12 Helicopter

Without rotors



Main fuselage length 125 feet
Main rotor diameter 115 feet
Cruising speed 120 knots
Cargo capacity 47,000 pounds
Range (with 47,000 lb. load) 215 NM

25X1

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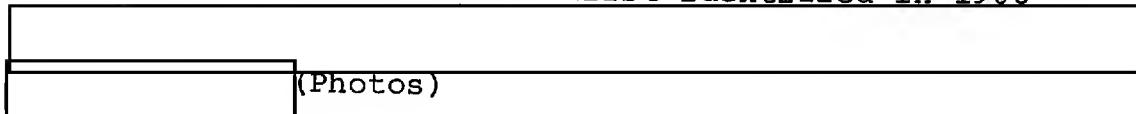
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USSR: The Soviets will display the TU-144 supersonic transport and the large MI-12 Homer helicopter at the Paris air show, according to French and Soviet officials. The TU-144 will fly two demonstration flights there early in June but the activity of the MI-12 helicopter has not yet been announced.

Although the TU-144 was first flown in December 1968, the aircraft was not displayed at the last Paris air show in the spring of 1969. The upcoming showing will not, however, be the first time that the TU-144 has been displayed for Western observers. Several viewings for foreign diplomats, newsmen, and SST specialists have been conducted in the USSR over the past two years.

The Paris showing will be the first public display of the MI-12 helicopter. The MI-12 is the world's largest transport helicopter and is capable of lifting about 47,000 pounds of cargo--more than twice as much as the largest US helicopter. The MI-12 was first identified in 1968



25X1

25X1

11 May 71

Central Intelligence Bulletin

5

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GREECE: Athens continues to improve its relations with its Balkan neighbors.

Albania recently agreed to restore diplomatic relations with Greece. Greek-Bulgarian relations have continued to brighten; both countries want to expand economic ties and there have been a number of reciprocal visits by top government officials. Greece and Romania signed a bilateral trade agreement in January, and [redacted]

25X1

[redacted] Foreign Minister Manescu will visit Greece in June. Greek-Yugoslav relations are basically good despite periodic strains over conflicting views of the Macedonian problem, and Athens is pursuing economic negotiations with Belgrade.

The Athens regime views good relations with its Communist neighbors as necessary because of the Soviet threat in the Mediterranean area and the general instability of the eastern Mediterranean. Despite the Greek Government's anti-Communist posture, it wants to benefit from improved economic ties with the Balkans and probably hopes such a policy will reduce the chances of trouble along its borders. [redacted]

25X1

11 May 71

Central Intelligence Bulletin

6

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OKINAWA: Chobyo Yara, Okinawa's leftist-backed chief executive, is in for rough sledding. Alleged corruption and threats of resignation by key government officials recently have seriously embarrassed Yara's administration. The opposition conservatives, the local arm of Japan's ruling conservative party, have been instructed from Tokyo to keep up their public attacks on Yara.

The conservatives have decided to stop short of forcing his resignation, probably because of fears that preparations for Okinawan reversion to Japanese control, expected in about one year, would be set back by the collapse of the Yara government and the ensuing distractions of an election campaign. The conservatives would rather have Yara and his leftist supporters the targets of public reaction to any unpopular aspects of the reversion arrangement. [REDACTED]

25X1
25X1

TURKEY: The security situation has improved markedly in recent days, amid increasing signs that martial law will continue for an extended period. Investigations and arrests are continuing at a deliberate pace and could run as high as 3,000. Martial law authorities may also assume jurisdiction over pending civil cases bearing on the recent crisis. Although press censorship has been avoided for the time being, a veiled threat of official action against the news media has made self-censorship the watchword. In parliament, early passage of the new and tougher martial law bill appears certain with the pledged support of the two major parties. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

11 May 71

Central Intelligence Bulletin

7

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